THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (c) A complaint was received by the Government of Haryana on alleged diversion of wheat meant for APL families by Fair Price Shop (FPS) owners with the connivance of officials of Food & Supplies Department and Confed in Nissing Block of Karnal District. After enquiry of the complaint by the State Government it was observed that prima facie, there appears a large scale mis-appropriation of APL wheat in Nissing Block with the active involvement of officials of Food & Supplies Department. On the basis of the inquiry report, State Government placed under suspension six officers/officials of the Department of Food & Supplies. Simultaneously, the State Government has entrusted an inquiry to commissioner, Rohtak Division, which is in progress. In the meanwhile the licenses of 11 erring Fair Price Shop dealers have been suspended and show cause notices have also been issued to them for cancellation of the licenses. Further the Managing Director, Confed was directed to take action against the officers/officials of that organization. The District Manager and Store-Keeper of Confed in Karnal have been placed under suspension. Show-cause notices have also been issued to the transport contractors for forfeiting of the security money.

Procurement of wheat

1301. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the official procurement of wheat this season has been less than that during last year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, with the actual procurement for the two years, separately; and

(c) the steps proposed by Government to ensure that low procurement this year does not lead to artificial increase in its prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The actual procurement of wheat for the last two Rabi Marketing Seasons 2004-05 and 2005-06 is as under:—

	(in lakh MT)
2004-05	167.95
2005-06	147.85

Procurement of foodgrains depends on a number of factors viz. production, market prices of foodgrains, market arrivals, number of procurement centres and participation of private trade. A combination of these factors, may have resulted in lower procurement of wheat by the Government agencies this year.

(c) The following steps are being taken to check artificial increase in prices of wheat:

(i) Monitoring of wholesale and retail prides in all major centres of the country on a weekly basis;

(ii) Adequate issue of wheat under the TPDS and other welfare schemes.

(iii) Release of wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS).

(iv) Ensuring adequate stocking of wheat in all the regions of the country.

Rice procurement by FCI in A.P.

1302. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of rice procured by the Food Corporation of India in Andhra Pradesh in the last six months;

(b) the further quantity expected to be procured by the FCI in the rest of this fiscal year in the State;

(c) the districts where the rice is being stored by the FCI;

(d) the storage charges paid by FCI in 2004-05 for the rice stored in private godowns in the State; and

(e) the steps proposed to reduce the expenses of storage?